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## **A Strategy to Develop Tolerance and Harmony among Students through Parent-Teacher Connection**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The parent teacher connection is regarded as a short meeting or a conference between parents and teachers of a specific student in order to discuss the student's progress at school and to find solutions to the academic and behavioral problems. The study is explanatory in nature and explains how parent teacher connection is effective in achieving harmony and tolerance among students. The conclusion approves that regular parent teacher connection is a three-way communication that helps the student in leading a successful life by becoming socially and morally responsible citizens of future.

***Keywords:***

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## Introduction

Parent teacher connection is an important factor in order to achieve major targets of an effective education i.e. Tolerance and harmony. In common, the parents do not try to develop an interaction with the teachers. Parent-teacher connection has been defined as:

“The function of a good parent-teacher relationship is much more than just a vehicle for status reports from teacher to parents on a child’s performance or behavior. It is really a partnership providing two-way information flow from the teacher to the parents about the child’s classroom achievements and persona and from the parent to the teacher about the complementary elements in the home environment”. It also provides mechanism for teachers in order to invite as well as support parents’ active participation in the education of their children in their home environment. And it can provide linkage between the classroom learning activities and the at-home learning activities<sup>(1)</sup>.

This is a meeting between a parent and a teacher to talk about the student’s learning and his/her progress. This may be regarded as parent-teacher interview, parent-teacher conference and even the learning conference.

Many schools organize parent-teacher connection/meeting early in the year and then after that the school report is sent home.

Schools might offer a set time, may invite to arrange a time, and schools are asking parents to book time that suits them using an online “parent-teacher interview website”. Some schools may hold meetings before or may be after the school, others run them in evenings.

More than a person can go to attend the meeting – parents are welcomed to take other members of the family. These meetings are useful and positive where as well as hearing from child's teacher, parents can ask questions as well as share your thoughts so that parents and teachers can become partners in the child's education.

### Good two-way communication

Good two-way communication between parent and teachers is essential for students' success. The more teachers and parents share relevant information with each other regarding the student, the better prepared will be both in order to help student achieve academically.

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(1) Loughran Sandra B, “The Importance Of Teacher/Parent Partnerships: Preparing Pre-Service And In-Service Teachers,” *Journal of College Teaching & Learning* 5, no.8 (2008): 35-38

Two-way communication includes:

1. Conferences
2. School community councils
3. Weekly/monthly folders of student work, sent home for parental review and comment
4. Phone calls
5. E-mails
6. School website

In more and more schools, students attend the meetings as well.

These meetings are called three-way conferences.

For successful parent teacher meetings, following suggestions are suggested<sup>(1)</sup>:

1. Try to focus on best interests of the student.
2. Try to concentrate on defining positive course of action.
3. Encourage child's parents to come to meeting with as many questions they can have.
4. Share that information that focuses on strengths, needs, goals as well as the instructional strategies.
5. Share information with the student. Students can then present their ideas and their perspectives to advocate for their specific needs.
6. Try to set up a procedure for follow-up.
7. Summarize information for the next meeting.
8. Express appreciation for each other's participation.

### **Communication strategies**

The formation of effective school-home communication is growing more complex as society has changed. It is necessary that a number of strategies, adapted to needs and demands of particular families and their schedules, be unified into a general plan. Some of the strategies to consider include:

1. Newsletters
2. Yearly open houses
3. Home visits (where and when applicable)
4. Annual calendars
5. Inserts/publishing in local newspapers
6. Annual grandparents day
7. Board of Education spokesperson
8. Homework hot-lines
9. Yearly field days
10. Notices and handouts in local markets
11. Workshops

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(1) Ziraldo Lorena, "Working Together: Effective Advocacy and Collaboration," *LD*

12. Face to face interaction
13. Invitations on particular days
14. Communications focused on fathers and mothers

### **Literature Review**

There was a survey conducted based on the data taken from total of 640 teachers. That survey revealed that the teachers have the knowledge regarding the significance and ways in order to develop connections with the parents of the students. The teachers use several ways but usually face certain problems to develop an effective relation with the parents due to the pitiable skills as well as non-cooperative approach of the parents. It is suggested the change in contents and the training patterns of teacher-education courses. This is also highlighting the need of appropriate planning and application in explaining roles of teachers as well as the school management in attaining proficiency to develop interaction with parents<sup>(1)</sup>. Another study sought to identify major factors that teachers and parents described as impacting on their connection. The major findings exposed that nature of parent-teacher connections was either collaborative or non-collaborative. Several activities reinforced practices. Positive or less than the satisfactory outcomes were afforded to students. It was found that parents and teachers had common preferences on what practices made their interactions collaborative. The study recommended professional learning opportunities for the teachers<sup>(2)</sup>.

### **Developing peace and harmony among students through Parent-Teacher Connection**

Parent-teacher connections help to create harmony among:

1. Teacher and child
2. Parent and child
3. Parent and teacher

Open communication may play a vital role in forming these partnerships. Parents feel invited and comfortable in order to approach teacher with questions, concerns and suggestions. The connection provides formal opportunities to go over the student's progress and hear parent's feedback; this communication, also, allows both to work together for the benefit of the child.

### **The best for the Child**

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- (1) Akhter Nasreen, "Parent Teacher Interaction in Elementary Schools: Current Status and Issues," *Journal of Elementary Education* 26, no. 2 (n.d): 1-13
  - (2) Ellis Michelle, Lock Graeme, and Lummis Geoff, "Parent-Teacher Interactions: Engaging With Parents and Carers," *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* 40, no. 5 (2015): 160-174

These are few of the many possibilities for teachers to connect with the parents of their students. They must keep in mind that they are serving the child and are also focusing on what is best for the child. A good connection between parent and teacher is important to give a child the best. Harmony can be achieved when:

1. The teacher and parents know their child.
2. The connection will help parents in understanding assessment as opposed to the testing
3. Teachers can try to fill gaps.
4. Teachers can help parents by suggesting different ways to reinforce children who learn to read as well as to suggest readings and workshops.
5. Teachers can suggest books as parents are not well-versed with children's literature.
6. Teachers can encourage parents to phone at specific times of the day.
7. As for the responding, most of the teachers find face to face interactions work best, particularly when the sensitive matters are concerned. Written words can be misunderstood in fact.
8. Teachers and parents do their best as they see whites of each other's eyes.
9. The child will be able to learn and to communicate well.
10. Teachers may get the chance to know about the personality, likes, dislikes, strengths and weaknesses of the child which is merely possible through the parent teacher connection.
11. The child will not hesitate in telling his/her problems<sup>(1)</sup>.

### **Behavior**

The connection may affect behaviors of all concerned: parents, teachers and the students. The efforts of teachers and the pedagogical practices might change as they regularly interact with the parents. Similarly, the parents might get more engaged with the child at home<sup>(2)</sup>.

### **More regular attendance**

Keeping in view the perfect attendance that is very important for higher academic achievement. Parent engagement may decrease chronic absenteeism and missing more than the twenty days of a school year.

### **Positive attitude**

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- (1) Loughran Sandra B, "The Importance Of Teacher/Parent Partnerships: Preparing Pre-Service And In-Service Teachers," *Journal of College Teaching & Learning* 5, no.8 (2008): 35-38
  - (2) Islam Asad, "Parent-Teacher Meetings and Student Outcomes: Evidence from a Developing Country," *European Economic Review* 111, (2019): 273-304

Children will have more positive attitude regarding the home work and school in general.

### **Parental involvement**

While interacting with teachers on regular basis, self-confidence and self-respect increases which in return is closely related to the parental involvement in the academic matters allowing children to get motivated to perform their best at school.

### **Establish good relationship**

1. Parents will be able to establish good relationship with their children.
2. Parents will spend quality time with their children.
3. Parents will listen to them carefully and will also respond with understanding.<sup>(1)</sup>

### **Better learning outcomes**

Engaging parents in child's education, at home or at school, is observed as a significant method of increasing better learning outcomes. The positive effects appear to be consistent regardless of levels of education as well as the work experience of school teachers providing the treatment, and socioeconomic background of students. Motivation and encouragement to have more parent-teacher interactions in schools can play a vital role in enlightening students' learning outcomes predominantly in low income rural areas in the developing countries.<sup>(2)</sup>

### **Role of parents in ensuring harmony and success**

“Do parents know how and what they can do to ensure their children's success? Do they understand how the school and home can work in harmony for the good of both?”<sup>(3)</sup>

It is possible that majority of parents are doing their best they can but they do not know answers to these questions. They are willing to help their children in achieving success but also they do not know how to do that. There are ten characteristics that can provide blueprint to parents in order to be more effective in ensuring their children's success.

1. Feeling of control over their lives.
2. Frequent communication to children.
3. Family dream of success.

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- (1) Kaukab Syeda Rakhshanda, “The Impact Of Parent/Family Involvement On Student Learning Outcomes” *International Journal of Research Granthaalayah* 4, no.10 (2016): 72-81
  - (2) Islam Asad, “Parent-Teacher Meetings and Student Outcomes: Evidence from a Developing Country,” *European Economic Review* 111, (2019): 273-304
  - (3) Campbell, “Parents and schools working for student success,” *NASSP Bulletin* 76, no. 543 (1992): 1-4

4. Hard work, the key.
5. An active lifestyle.
6. Twenty five to thirty five home centered learning hours in a week.
7. Parent and teacher both are viewed as a mutual support system as well as the problem-solving units.
8. Clearly understood school rules that are constantly enforced.
9. Frequent contact with teachers.
10. Emphasizing spiritual growth.

### **Educational Venture**

An important focus of parent-teacher connection and regular conferences is on the “educational venture” because they work together on their child’s educational program.

“There is increasing evidence that a child’s educational progress is accelerated when teachers and parents work in close relationship”<sup>(1)</sup>.

### **Social Construction**

Social construction means making the child an “ideal child” for the society. It is not possible in all ways but it is an attempt to at least help him/her in achieving the status. Both parent and teacher focus on the social skills because these skills are carried on through the life of the child<sup>(2)</sup>.

### **Sense of security**

One of the most observed benefits is that the child feels that his/her teacher or parent is working together and supporting in order to give him the best in life. This is the best feeling ever for a human on this earth. Similarly, when both work together, they can set clear and concise expectations from the child and the child would know those expectations and would be able to fulfill them too. Parents and teachers can also set boundaries for the child that are well articulated and defined. By doing this, they would be able to form a collaborative team in order to predict problems and their solutions easily and with proper definitions. So, we cannot underestimate the power of parent teacher regular connection.

### **Miscellaneous benefits**

1. Increased motivation
2. Fewer/less suspensions
3. Improved and positive attitude
4. Decreased use of drugs
5. Higher rating

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(1) Seligman Milton, “Conducting Effective Conferences with Parents of Children with Disabilities: A Guide for Teachers,” *Guilford Press* (2000): 9

(2) Trumbull Elise, Rothstein-Fisch Carrie, M. Greenfield Patricia, Quiroz Blanca, “Bridging Cultures Between Home and School: A Guide for Teachers,” *Routledge* (2001): 121-200

6. Improved morale
7. Increased support
8. Mental relaxation
9. Increased cooperation<sup>(1)</sup>.

### **Developing tolerance among students through Parent-teacher connection**

Tolerance is one of the best practices that help people to live together in harmony and stability.

Teaching tolerance, peace, human rights, dignity, respect, cooperation, understanding, appreciation and human values have been one of the main educational and teaching activities of many educational systems<sup>(2)</sup>.

#### **Chat, don't lecture**

*Lecturing is conflated with pontificating. Don't do that.*

It is suggested to have that kind of parent-teacher connection in which all of the three should have a discussion. Conversations are relevant when supported by certain evidences, including facts that may support big ideas. Welcome the student so that he/she can say in order to support or contradict points. At the end, student may feel like he/she reaches right conclusion on his/her own and everyone will feel valued for his/her contributions. This may help in achieving the following in students by limiting tolerance:

1. Bursting stereotypes
2. Make a check on how tolerant the student in school?
3. Teaching tolerance through music
4. Everybody is unique, respect differences

#### **Rejecting intolerant behavior**

No matter how benevolent, the end rarely justifies the means. It is suggested to both parent and teacher that to push back on intolerance. It is noticed that little intolerances may grow into big ones. Don't do that. Stop it before the action becomes a habit.

#### **Passive Listening**

It involves a very high level of attentiveness and concentration. Through passive listening, parent and teacher can help in developing tolerance in their child. They may use the following methods:

1. Invitation to talk

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- (1) A. Olender Rosemary, Elias Jacquelyn, D. Mastroleo Rosemary, "The School-Home Connection: Forging Positive Relationships With Parents," *Corwin Press* (2010): 131
  - (2) Alzyoud Mohammad Sayel, Falah Abdullah, Al Khaddam, Ali Salem, "The Impact of Teaching Tolerance on Students in Jordanian Schools," *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* (2016)



- It means “How can I help you?” This question can be asked to the child so that he/she may feel openness and develops courage in talking and sharing.
2. Neutral feedback  
“Go on”, “Right”, “Huh”  
This looks like that the child is being listened carefully as feedback is the best way to give attention.
  3. Avoiding communication blocks  
It is recommended not to criticize all the time. Let him/her talk with flaws (if any).
  4. Give him/her hundred percent attention at least for half an hour.  
The child will in return tolerate when the other person speaks.
  5. It is important to stop self-listening  
It means do not get in to other person’s thoughts.
  6. Ask open questions with encouragement.  
Try not to hide anything but keep a check on the language, words and the tone with which something is said to the child.
  7. Use of attentive silence in order to encourage child to open up  
Sometimes, being quite when someone is speaking is the best therapy to avoid aggression and promote tolerance. When this activity is being practiced in young age, the child grows up with positivity as how to listen to someone when he/she gets angry or is frustrated. Silence is the best key to a moral and emotional support. Attentive Silence is defined as an attitude or state of mind which requires self-discipline and patience. It is actually a conscious decision in order to be silent when the other person is telling something, listen, as well as to hear what the next person is saying. It demonstrates thoughtfulness as well as consideration, both, at the same time in order to allowing one to uncover his/her real message of what he/she is speaking. It is a beautiful method of communicating with grace and sympathy, making the other person feel that he/she is being heard and understood at the same time<sup>(1)</sup>.

### **Emotional support**

At the early age, child is emotionally weak and can experience anger and lack of tolerance. The misunderstanding of any worse situation or circumstance may cause trouble for the child. The early encounters with pain can be healed with emotional support by the parent and the teacher. Unwell children can be unaware of the fact and can get stressed on small things. The parent teacher relationship can also cater this problem by

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(1) Stakes Richard, Hornby Garry, “Meeting Special Needs in Mainstream Schools: A Practical Guide for Teachers,” *Routledge* (2012): 144

understanding the emotional misbalance of the child. This is the time to increase the ability of the child to help him/her in emotional situations so that he/she can tolerate the emotional difficulty within himself/herself.

To cater this problem, both should get the opportunity to talk to the child in a peaceful environment with positivity. Bot should be prepared for the inevitable discussion about the matter<sup>(1)</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

The discussion concludes that parent teacher regular interaction is helpful in achieving harmony and tolerance among students. The communication between teacher and parent may help keep each other informed regarding the key information about the child. The student's teacher will get benefited from knowing his/her physical or psychological needs, his/her interests and talents which he/she may want to highlight, as well as school-related programs in which he/she is participating. The student will be more open about his/her problems. The student will be more focused, well-behaved, communicative, confident, patient that will lead him/her to a successful afterwards. Teachers and parents go hand in hand for all-round development of student. In return, students become socially and morally responsible citizens of future.



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(1) Porter Louise, "Teacher-parent Collaboration: Early Childhood to Adolescence," *Aust Council for Ed Research* (2008): 261